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FOR EB: DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY KATZ

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, OECD

SUBJECT: OECD HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON COMMODITIES (HLGC):

MEETING JULY 7-8

1. SUMMARY: IN PARTICULARLY WIDE RANGING SESSION, WITH GREATLY IMPROVED PARTICIPATION BY EC AND MEMBER STATES, HLGC HAD CONSTRUCTIVE AND USEFUL DISCUSSION OF US PROPOSAL FOR INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES BANK AND OF TECHNICAL PROBLEMS THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE FACED IN DEALING WITH QUESTION OF COMMON FUND. GROUP ALSO HAD EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON PROGRESS OF NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE IN COMMODITY FIELD THUS FAR AND PROSPECTS FOR SECOND HALF OF CIEC AND FOLLOW-UP TO UNCTAD IV. OTHER DELS EXPRESSED INTEREST AND INDICATED A GENERALLY POSITIVE ATTITUDE TO IRB PROPOSAL, AND US DEL PROMISED FURTHER EXPLANATIONS--POSSIBLY IN FORM OF Q'S AND A'S--FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOMETIME IN FUTURE. ON COMMON FUND, GROUP AGREED THAT,

ASIDE FROM PRINCIPLE OF WHETHER OR NOT THERE SHOULD BE ONE, QUESTIONS OF SCOPE, TIMING, AND DECISION-MAKING WITH RESPECT TO ANY SUCH FUND WERE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT. HLGC AGREED IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON COMMON FUND ISSUES AT NEXT MEETING, WHICH WAS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 21-22.

END SUMMARY.

2. FINANCING OF ACTION IN COMMODITY FIELD: AGREEING THAT DISCUSSION OF PRINCIPLE OF COMMON FUND WOULD NOT BE FRUITFUL, HLGC ADDRESSED, WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO ANYONE'S FUTURE POSITION, NUMBER OF KEY PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD BE INVOLVED IN SUCH A FUND. MOST DELS FOCUSED ON QUESTIONS OF NATURE AND SCOPE OF FUND, TIMING OF ESTABLISHMENT, AND DECISION-MAKING. ON SCOPE MANY DELS FELT THAT, ASIDE FROM SIMPLE POOLING OF EXISTING EXCESS BUFFER STOCK FUNDS, A FUND SOLELY TO FINANCE BUFFER STOCKS WOULD BE LEAST OBNOXIOUS OBJECTIVE, WHILE CREATION OF FUND WITH AUTHORITY TO INTERVENE INDEPENDENTLY ON COMMODITY MARKETS, OR TO PROVIDE FINANCE FOR OTHER KINDS OF COMMODITY ACTIVITIES, WOULD GIVE RISE TO VERY SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES. ON THE OTHER HAND THERE WAS WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION THAT LDC OBJECTIVE WAS CLEARLY TO RAISE MONEY, USE OF WHICH WOULD BE DECIDED LATER. NORWAY WAS ONLY DEL TO COME OUT CLEARLY IN FAVOR OF THIS POSITION. FRG (KIPPER) WAS VERY NEGATIVE ON SEPARATE FINANCING FOR A COMMON FUND. FRENCH DEL (COLLIN) WAS ALSO CAUTIOUS, INDICATING THAT EASIEST KIND OF FUND FOR GOF TO ACCEPT WOULD BE PURELY FINANCIAL MECHANISM WHICH OBTAINED FUNDS MAINLY FROM IFI'S AND EXISTING BUFFER STOCKS, AND PLAYED ONLY SUPPLEMENTAL OR COMPLEMENTARY FINANCING ROLE.

3. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT QUESTIONS OF TIMING AND CONTROL OF A COMMON FUND WERE CLOSELY RELATED TO THAT OF SCOPE. A SEPARATELY FINANCED FUND WOULD REQUIRE EARLY ESTABLISHMENT WHILE A MERE POOLING OF EXCESS BUFFER STOCK FUNDS LOGICALLY IMPLIED ESTABLISHMENT AFTER IT WAS SEEN WHAT KIND OF PROGRESS WAS MADE ON COMMODITY AGREEMENTS. DELS ADMITTED THAT NAIROBI TIME-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TABLE WAS, HOWEVER, NOT COMPATIBLE WITH LOGIC OF ESTABLISHING FUND AFTER AGREEMENTS CONCLUDED. AS FOR CONTROL, FRENCH DEL NOTED THAT A PURELY COMPLEMENTARY AND FINANCIAL TYPE FUND WOULD NOT REQUIRE SAME KIND OF TIGHT CONTROL AS WOULD A MORE AMBITIOUS VERSION. WHILE MANY DELS EXPRESSED PREFERENCE FOR VOTING TO BE WEIGHTED ACCORDING TO FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS, THERE WAS RECOGNITION THAT UNCTAD IDEAS WERE ALONG DIFFERENT LINES,

CONSISTING OF A MIXTURE OF ONE-COUNTRY/ONE-VOTE AND FINANCIAL WEIGHT CRITERIA. GROUP GENERALLY AGREED THAT ESTIMATES FOR SIZE OF FUND WERE NOT WELL SUPPORTED AND THAT OECD SECRETARIAT MIGHT TRY TO DO FURTHER WORK IN THIS AREA.

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4. US DEL (WENDT) NOTED THAT US DID NOT ACCEPT PRINCIPLE OF FUND AND SO FOUND IT LOGICALLY DIFFICULT TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE OBJECTIVES. HE NOTED THAT INDEPENDENT OPERATIONS BY ANY FUND ON COMMODITY MARKETS WOULD BE VERY UNWELCOME AND IN ANY CASE PROBABLY UNFEASIBLE. HE ARGUED THAT ONLY WAY AMOUNT OF FUNDS COULD BE DECIDED FOR BUFFER STOCKS WAS ON COMMODITY-BY-COMMODITY BASIS, AND POINTED OUT THAT LEVEL OF FUNDS NEEDED WAS HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON PRICE STABILIZATION

OBJECTIVES. US DEL INDICATED ITS VIEW THAT STOCK FINANCING HAD NOT BEEN OBSTACLE TO COMMODITY NEGOTIATIONS IN PAST, AND SAID US WAS WILLING TO CONSIDER ADVANTAGES OF POSSIBLE POOLING OF INDIVIDUAL COMMODITY FUNDS IN LIGHT OF PROGRESS IN COMMODITY-BY-COMMODITY DISCUSSIONS. HE ALSO RECALLED US HAD STATED AT NAIROBI IT WOULD NOT WANT A BUFFER STOCK IN WHICH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT PARTICIPATED TO FAIL FOR LACK OF ADEQUATE FINANCING.

5. INVESTMENT: DISCUSSION WAS DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO US PROPOSAL FOR INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES BANK (IRB), ON BASIS OF US PAPER CIRCULATED AT JUNE SESSION OF CIEC. US DEL MADE PRESENTATION OF BASIC PREMISES AND FEATURES OF IRB PROPOSAL, ANSWERED LARGE NUMBER OF QUESTIONS POSED BY OTHER DELS, AND OFFERED (IN RESPONSE TO REQUEST BY CHAIR AND EC COMMISSION) TO PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION AT SOME LATER POSSIBLY IN FORM OF Q'S AND A'S REFLECTING DISCUSSION AT THIS MEETING, TO ASSIST IN CLARIFYING PROPOSAL. OTHER DELS GENERALLY EXPRESSED REGRET THAT NAIROBI RESOLUTION ON IRB HAD BEEN DEFEATED, WELCOMED OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS IN HLCG, AND CONSIDERED IRB WORTH CONTINUED CONSIDERATION. NEVERTHELESS QUESTIONING, WHILE FRIENDLY, WAS GENERALLY PENETRATING AND REVEALED SOME OBVIOUS SKEPTICISM REGARDING FEASIBILITY OF SOME ASPECTS OF PROPOSAL.

6. SEVERAL DELS QUESTIONED RELATIONSHIP OF IRB TO INTEGRATED PROGRAM AND COMMON FUND, AND IN PARTICULAR ASKED ABOUT POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON COMMODITY PRICES. US DEL REPLIED THAT ANY COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO COMMODITY PROBLEMS WOULD HAVE TO INCLUDE TREATMENT OF INVESTMENT ISSUE AND STRESSED THAT IRB ADDRESSED DIFFERENT SET OF ISSUES THAN COMMON FUND AND WAS NOT MEANT AS ALTERNATIVE TO IT. ON PRICE QUESTION, US DEL EMPHASIZED THAT PURPOSE OF IRB WAS TO ENSURE MORE EFFICIENT ALLOCATION OF INVESTMENT RATHER THAN SIMPLY INCREASE SUPPLY, AND POINTED OUT THAT LOWER PRICES, EVEN IF INDUCED TEMPORARILY BY INCREASED SUPPLY, NEED NOT MEAN LOWER INCOME AND PROFITABILITY IF THEY RESULT FROM MORE EFFICIENT PRODUCTION. US SUGGESTED THAT MORE EFFICIENT INVESTMENT ALLOCATION COULD HAVE SALUTARY EFFECT ON PRICE STABILITY AS BY PRODUCT. FRENCH DEL (COLLIN) TOOK A PARTICULARLY RESERVED POSITION, SAYING THAT IRB WOULD MAKE LITTLE CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING INVESTMENT FLOWS IN ABSENCE OF PROGRESS ON PRICE STABILIZATION ISSUE AND THAT THESE TWO QUESTIONS MUST BE STUDIED TOGETHER. SWEDES ALSO THOUGHT PRICES

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WERE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN INVESTMENT EQUATION,
ALONG WITH POLICIES OF MNC'S.

7. MORE PRECISE EXPLANATION OF POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN IRB, HOST GOVERNMENT, AND INVESTORS WAS ANOTHER
AREA WHERE NUMBER OF DELS WISHED CLARIFICATIONS. IN
RESPONSE US DEL OUTLINED KINDS OF SUBJECTS WHICH MIGHT
BE INCLUDED IN TRILATERAL AGREEMENT, SUCH AS FINANCING,
TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER, MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS, PRODUCTION
SHARING, TRAINING OF LOCAL PERSONNEL, IMPORT LICENSING,
EARNINGS REPATRIATION, AND PROVISIONS FOR CONTINGENCY
SITUATIONS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT NO SPECIFIC GUIDELINES
WOULD BE SET BY IRB BUT THAT TRILATERAL AGREEMENTS
WOULD BE FREELY NEGOTIATED AMONG PARTIES INVOLVED. US
DEL MADE CLEAR THAT FUNCTION OF IRB WAS NOT
THAT OF TRADITIONAL BANK BUT RATHER TO PROVIDE
INSURANCE FOR INVESTORS AGAINST NON-COMMERCIAL RISKS.
OTHER QUESTIONS FIELDDED BY US DEL IN TERMS CONSISTENT
WITH PAPER DISTRIBUTED AT JUNE CIEC SESSION CONCERNED
ROLE OF COMMODITY BONDS, SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR IRB, AND
ADEQUACY OF LOSS RESERVE FUND. IN REPLY TO QUESTION
BY DEL FROM NORWAY, US DEL STATED THAT REFERENCE TO
BUFFER STOCK FINANCING FUNCTION HAD BEEN OMITTED FROM

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IRB PAPER SUBMITTED IN CIEC IN ORDER TO PLACE EMPHASIS
ON THE INVESTMENT NATURE OF THE IRB.

8. AT END OF DISCUSSION CHAIRMAN SUGGESTED THAT ONE
AREA WHERE NUMBER OF GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE EXISTED AND WHERE
OECD COULD DO USEFUL WORK WOULD BE TO DEVELOP BETTER
FACTUAL PICTURE OF INVESTMENT SITUATION IN RAW MATERIALS.
THIS SUGGESTION RECEIVED GENERAL SUPPORT FROM GROUP
(EXCEPT AUSTRALIA) AND FOR NEXT MEETING SECRETARIAT
WILL MAKE SUGGESTION AS TO KIND OF FORMAT THAT MIGHT BE
USED IN TRYING TO SEEK BETTER INFORMATION ON THIS QUES-
TION FROM MEMBER GOVERNMENTS, RECOGNIZING THE PROBLEMS
RAISED BY CONSIDERATIONS OF COMMERCIAL SECRECY.

9. RESULTS OF NAIROBI AND FIRST HALF OF CIEC: MOST
DELS WERE GENERALLY PLEASED THAT CONSENSUS RESOLUTION
HAD BEEN POSSIBLE AT NAIROBI. ALL AGREED THAT POSITIVE
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SPIRIT WAS NEEDED IN APPROACHING UNCTAD 4 FOLLOW-UP AND
CIEC SECOND PHASE. DELS ALSO AGREED ON DESIRABILITY
OF MORE INTENSIVE USE OF HLGC FOR FULL AND FRANK EX-
CHANGE OF VIEWS IN ORDER TO NARROW DIFFERENCES AND
DETERMINE WHERE CONSENSUS WAS POSSIBLE ON KEY ISSUES.

10. FOLLOW-UP TO UNCTAD IV: HLGC AGREED IT WOULD BE
USEFUL FOR MEMBERS TO EXCHANGE VIEWS IN SEPTEMBER ON
COMMON FUND ISSUES. IT WAS FELT THAT THIS EXCHANGE
WOULD BE PARTICULARLY VALUABLE TO MEMBERS WHO PLAN TO
SUBMIT PROPOSALS TO UNCTAD SECRETARIAT ON COMMON FUND
DUE BY END OF THAT MONTH. EC SAID IT WOULD BE TRYING
TO ARRIVE AT COMMON POSITION DURING EARLY SEPTEMBER AND
THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE COMMON APPROACH
AMONG OECD COUNTRIES. SEVERAL DELS, INCLUDING US,
DOUBTED FEASIBILITY OR WISDOM OF TRYING TO MAKE UNIFIED
GROUP B SUBMISSION, AND US NOTED IT HAD NOT YET DECIDED

WHETHER TO MAKE A SUBMISSION. SWEDES CAUTIONED AGAINST APPEARING TO MOVE BACKWARDS FROM NAIROBI RESOLUTION AND SAID ANY SUBMISSIONS SHOULD ADDRESS ROLE OF FUND RATHER THAN PRINCIPLE OF ITS ESTABLISHMENT. MEMBER COUNTRIES AGREED WITH CHAIRMAN THAT ROLE OF SEPTEMBER CONSULTATIONS SHOULD BE ESSENTIALLY TO MINIMIZE DIFFICULTIES WHICH DIFFERING OECD POSITIONS ON THIS ISSUE MIGHT CAUSE FOR EACH OTHER.

11. ON QUESTION OF COMMODITY DISCUSSIONS, CONSENSUS WAS THAT DETERMINATION OF PRIORITIES SHOULD BE LEFT TO UNCTAD SECRETARIAT, THAT EXISTING BODIES SHOULD BE USED WHERE POSSIBLE (WHILE RECOGNIZING CERTAIN FREEDOM GIVEN UNCTAD SECRETARY GENERAL BY NAIROBI RESOLUTION), AND THAT HLCG SHOULD MAINTAIN GENERAL OVERVIEW OF DISCUSSIONS RATHER THAN SERVE COORDINATING FUNCTION FOR INDIVIDUAL COMMODITY MEETINGS. CANADA AND AUSTRALIA FAVERED SOMEWHAT MORE ACTIVE ROLE BY GROUP B COUNTRIES IN TRYING TO SUGGEST PRIORITIES AND FORUMS. SWISS DEL REPORTED UNCTAD SECGEN WISHED TO START WITH COMMODITIES WITH FEWEST POLITICAL PROBLEMS AMONG PRODUCERS--JUTE, HARD FIBERS, AND RUBBER. SWEDEN DOUBTED ABILITY OF EXISTING BODIES TO MAKE PROGRESS REQUIRED TO SUSTAIN POLITICAL MOMENTUM OF DIALOGUE. AT END CHAIRMAN PRES- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TON MADE PLEA FOR OECD GOVERNMENTS TO ADOPT A BROAD INTERPRETATION OF WHAT COULD BE INCLUDED IN "COMMODITY AGREEMENTS"--USING IMAGINATION TO DEVELOP A RANGE OF MEASURES TO ACHIEVE BALANCED SOLUTIONS FOR PARTICULAR PRODUCTS EVEN WHERE BUFFER STOCKS WERE INAPPROPRIATE--

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IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CREDIBILITY OF A COMMODITY-BY-COMMODITY APPROACH.

12. CIEC SECOND HALF: DISCUSSION WAS CONFINED TO STATEMENTS BY US AND EC BOTH OF WHICH SUPPORTED INVESTMENT AS ISSUE FOR CONCENTRATION IN CIEC. CONSENSUS OF GROUP WAS THAT THERE WAS NOT MUCH USE HAVING MORE INTENSIVE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THESE ISSUES UNTIL RESULTS OF HIGH LEVEL OFFICIALS MEETING WERE KNOWN.

13. EC PARTICIPATION: PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSION BY EC PRESIDENCY, COMMISSION, AND MEMBER STATES--AT LEAST ON FIRST THREE AGENDA ITEMS--WAS MORE EXTENSIVE THAN AT ANY HLG MEETING SINCE BEGINNING OF CIEC AND WAS WELCOMED BY OTHER DELS. WHILE LEAD WAS GENERALLY TAKEN BY PRESIDENCY (GAUTIER OF NETHERLANDS), HE FREQUENTLY MADE POINT OF INVITING MEMBER STATES TO GIVE THEIR OWN
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VIEWS AS WELL. THIS THEY USUALLY DID, WHILE SOMETIMES CHARACTERIZING THEM AS "PERSONAL". OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH DELEGATES INDICATE THAT THIS RELAXATION OF THE "GAG RULE" IS THE RESULT PRIMARILY OF UK AND FRG PRESSURE PLUS RECEPTIVE ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE DUTCH. IT SEEMS LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT CHAIRMAN PRESTON WILL GENERALLY AVOID TRYING TO SUM UP SUCH DISCUSSIONS TO AVOID GIVING IMPRESSION EC MEMBERS ARE REACHING CONCLUSIONS IN OECD RATHER THAN IN BRUSSELS. ALSO, EC MEMBERS DID NOT SPEAK SEPARATELY DURING DISCUSSION OF FOLLOW UP TO UNCTAD-4 AND SECOND

PHASE OF CIEC. UNDER LAST ITEM EC REP MADE CLEAR THEY
VIEWED HLG C MAINLY AS PLACE TO HEAR VIEWS OF NON-
PARTICIPANTS IN CIEC.
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